Exploration work a Somnath and Pindara sites of Dwarka

184. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) Whether any systematic exploration work at Somnath and Pindara, contemporary sites of Dwarka, have been or are proposed to be carried out to ascertain the cause of submergence of the legendary city of Lord Krishna in the sea;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether the archaelogists, historians and marine experts have been associated with this study; and

(d) at what stage the matter stands at present?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAJMANGAL PANDE): (a) and (b) Exploration and excavations at Somnath and Pindara were carried out by various agencies in the past. The Emeritus Scientist, who carried underwater operations offshore near present Dwarka, was of the view that ancient Dwarka submerged into sea as a result of the rise in the sea level. The excavation at Somnath revealed a sequence of culture dating from *circa* second millennium B.C. to Kshatrapa-Gupta time the evidence found at pindara more or less coincides with the one found at Dwarka. Recently a Shiv-linga and its base has also been noticed on the site. In the underwater operations offshore Dwarka, stone-blocks, remains of ancient walls potteries of different periods and various types of antiquities including anchors have been noticed.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The archaeologists, historians and other experts were associated with the underwater operations offshore Dwarka. The identification of submerged site in the sea near Dwarka with the ancient city of Lord Krishna has not been unanimously accepted by scholars.

Expenditure incurred by Air India and Indian Airlines on repatriation of Indian Nationals from West Asia

185. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the expenditure incurred by Air India and Indian Airlines on the repatriation of Indian nationals from West Asia during the period from August, 1990 to January, 1991; and

(b) what amount has been collected todate by the Indian Airlines on account of the Gulf surcharge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN) (a) Air India has raised a claim of Rs. 227.21 crores for Gulf evacuation with their own and leased aircraft.

(b) Indian Airlines has collected an amount of Rs. 24 crores approximately on account of Gulf Evacuation surcharge upto 31st January, 1991.

Proposal to acquire New Aircraft by Air India

186. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India propose to acquire new aircrafts in the near future;

(b) if so, what types of aircraft are to be acquired and the number thereof;

(c) whether the engines for the same have also been finalised;

(d) what are the offers that have been received in this connection;

(e) which of the engines have been found to be most fuel efficient;

(f) whether any committee has been formed to evaluate the offers for engines; and

(g) if so, what is the composition thereof and what are its terms of reference?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Air India has submitted a proposal for acquisition of four Boeing 747-400 aircraft during 1992-96.

(c) to (g) The process of selection of engines for the aircraft is yet to be completed.

Upgrading of Jaipur Airport

187. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Jaipur Airport urgently requires expansion of its runway to accommodate, Airbus flights and also there is need for construction of spacious departure and arrival terminals and installation and baggage conveyor belts; and

(b) by when Government propose to upgrade Jaipur airport as an international airport keeping in view its tourist importance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are no plans to make Jaipur airport as an international airport. However, the National Airports Authority have plans to carry out major additions/alterations to the existing terminal building and to extend the main runuway by 1500 feet for operation of A-320 aircraft during 1991-92 subject to the State Government diverting a small road running across the airport land.

Setting up of a National Power Grid

188. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) what progress has so far been made for the setting up of a National Power Grid;

(b) what was the total amount of Central assistance/loan released to the States for power generation programmen in 1990-91 (upto the end of December, 1990) and what is the estimated provision made for the year 1991-92, particularly pertaining to the States of Rajasthan and Orissa; and

(c) whether a new technology of High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission has been found to be useful, if so, in which parts of the country the HVDC transmission system has been introduced so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI BABANRAO DHAKNE): (a) Power systems of the various states in the country have been connected together to form five regional gride. Inter connections between the various regions will be provided by means of HVDC back to back tie line stations for controlled transfer of power from one region to the other. This will from the structure of the National Grid which will evolve over a period of time. HVDC tie line station between Northern and Western Region is in operation.

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) High Voltage Direct Current has been found useful for bulk transfer of ower and a line between Rihand and Dadri is expected to be brought in stable operation shortly.